



Fast Roads Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1179/2024)

Abstract

This document outlines policy and procedure relating to incidents that occur on motorways and other strategic roads within Surrey and Sussex.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The policing of the road network is recognised as being a high risk operational activity and one which places police officers and staff at risk of injury or incident.

2. Scope

2.1 This document outlines policy and procedure relating to incidents on the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Road Network (SRN) and other Fast Roads. The target audience for this document is all police officers or staff who, as part of their duties use, command, or deploy resources to the SRN or other Fast Roads in response to an incident whether spontaneous or pre-deployed. This document must be read in conjunction with:

Authorised Professional Practice – Roads Policing - Management of incidents.

National Decision Model (NDM).

Generic Risk Assessment – Attending Incidents on the SRN

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Surrey Police and Sussex Police (hereafter referred to as the Forces) will, in support of National Highways, ensure our motorways and road networks are policed effectively. In addition to all relevant Force procedures, incidents will be managed in accordance with Highways Agency et al. (2012) Collision, Lead, Evaluate, Act, and Re-open (CLEAR) Keeping Traffic Moving principles. Decisions must be made in accordance with the NDM.

Procedure

1. Strategic / Fast Roads Definition

1.1 The Forces break down the definition based on the enhanced risks and training required. There are two types of “Fast Roads” within the two counties. Strategic Road Network and Divisional Fast Roads.

1.2 Strategic Road Network (SRN)

These are the following high risk roads in both counties:

- M25
- M23 (including Junction 9-9A Gatwick Link)
- M3
- A3
- A31 (Guildford to Shepherd and Flock RA)
- A331
- A316 (Sunbury X to Metropolitan Police Border)
- A23 (From Pease Pottage to the A27 intersection at Patcham)
- A27 (Any two or more lane section of dual carriageway from the Hampshire Border to the Kent Border)
- A24 from the Great Daux Roundabout at Horsham to the A280 interchange at Findon
- A26 Newhaven to A27
- A21
- A259 Hastings to Kent Border

1.3 For the purposes of the definition, the Hindhead Tunnel and the Southwick Tunnel will remain classified as Strategic Roads due to the inherent dangers of working within a tunnel subject to the national speed limit.

1.4 Any Strategic Road with any temporary speed limit will still be classified as a Strategic Road.

1.5 Divisional Fast Roads (DFR)

All other roads comprising of a two or more lane dual carriageway in the two counties with a speed limit of 40MPH and above. For the purposes of this document the Cuilfail Tunnel will be classified as a DFR due to the inherent risks associated with tunnel working.

1.6 As above, any DFR with a temporary speed limit will still be classified as a DFR.

1.7 All staff are reminded that all roads, whether they be SRN, DFR or 30MPH routes have inherent risks. The same core principles apply to any road regardless of its speed / design. These being: Always wear issued High visibility clothing, never turn your back on traffic, utilise early warning through signage, and always call for assistance if an incident is getting beyond your capacity and capability.

2. Training and deployment requirements for SRN and DFR

2.1 It is important to note that all police officers and staff are permitted to use the entire roads network.

2.2 Working on the SRN and the wider 'Fast Road' network is recognised as being a high risk operational deployment, and one which places police officers and staff at risk of injury or incident. All actions taken by officers and staff whilst operating in these conditions should be dynamically risk assessed in line with the NDM and all officers and staff must be able to justify their actions, including the speed travelled, ensuring they are necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

2.3 All staff must know their current Fast Roads training grade and understand its limitations. If they are deployed to an incident outside of their training capability, they must inform the relevant Force Control Room (FCR) / Force Command and Control Communications Department (FCCCD).

2.4 All staff must ensure that the arrival and departure from a Fast Road incident is clearly and promptly communicated to FCR / FCCCD. This is to ensure partner agencies and media are kept updated and provides risk mitigation.

2.5 Strategic Roads Network trained officers will have undertaken the Forces 1 day SRN course which includes a 4-hour classroom input in line with College of Policing (CoP) guidelines.

2.6 SRN trained officers can be deployed or self-deploy to any incident within the SRN or DFR network.

2.7 Redacted section

2.8 Divisional Fast Roads trained officers will have undertaken the Forces Divisional Fast Roads training course.

2.9 DFR trained officers can be deployed or self-deploy to any incident on a DFR. They should not be deployed or self-deploy to an incident on the SRN unless there is an Article 2 - Right to Life, European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) consideration.

2.10 DFR trained officers can however be deployed onto the SRN if directed to by SRN trained officers, provided the SRN trained officers remain at the scene to oversee the DFR trained officer's actions. Examples but not exhaustive are:

- Deliver additional emergency signing / coning equipment
- Provide additional assistance at the scene through number of staff or number of illuminated vehicles.

2.11 Redacted section

2.12 Fast Road Aware staff whose job role is less likely to involve dealing with incidents on SRN or DFR fit into this category, these officers and staff must have completed the compulsory College Learn and be fully conversant with its contents.

2.13 Redacted section

2.14 Officers and staff who have received the 'Fast Roads' Awareness College Learn package who encounter a spontaneous incident whilst using a Strategic Road / Fast Road will follow the guidelines below:-

- The unit will contact their Force Control Room - using the METHANE and ACE CARD mnemonic if necessary, and as outlined in the APP.

Major Incident declared?

Exact location.

Type of incident.

Hazards present or suspected.

Access.

Number, type, severity of casualties.

Emergency services present and those required.

Approach.

Caution signs.

Examine Scene.

Casualties.

Ambulance / Fire & Rescue / other agencies.

Remove obstructions.

Detailed investigation.

- In general, the unit will not stop. Stopping on an SRN or DFR will only be carried out if absolutely necessary for the immediate protection of life. The Forces recognise that resourcing issues mean that adherence to this policy will not always be possible, but we must endeavour to use trained resources whenever possible. Article 2 ECHR means we have an obligation to attend these incidents. This will be under the direction of the Force Incident Manager (FIM), only in the circumstances outlined above, may officers self-deploy.

- The relevant FIM must ensure that an appropriate safety briefing is provided to DFN (onto SRN) and Fast Roads Aware staff when deployed under an Article 2 consideration. This briefing must be delivered as soon as practicable and include the following as a minimum: officers to ensure they are wearing high visibility clothing, never turn their back on traffic, utilise all available rear facing emergency lighting, consider the closure of all lanes on the carriageway until SRN or DFR trained unit arrives.

- In this case, officers must carry out a dynamic NDM assessment, and consider stopping on the hard shoulder or verge if appropriate, and display rear blue and red lights only, ensuring where possible to leave a minimum of a 50 metre gap between the subject vehicle and police vehicle.

- If the officer is required to leave the police vehicle, reflective outer clothing must be worn, and be zipped up. If not in a marked police vehicle or not carrying a reflective jacket, officers must be aware of the significantly increased risk to them, and this needs to be considered in their risk assessment.

Stopping should only be in exceptional circumstances, to avert an immediate risk to life or serious injury.

2.15 Where an officer is deployed or responds to an incident as outlined above, the standard equipment carried in the vehicle is to be used as appropriate. Should an officer require any further equipment or foresee the need for additional resources at the scene, or support for wider traffic management issues, they should inform FCR / FCCCD at the earliest opportunity.

3. Use of the Hard Shoulder

3.1 Officers using the hard shoulder for a policing purpose and utilising the exemption to Regulation 9 of The Motorway Traffic (England and Wales) Regulations 1982 must use the NDM before and during its use, to ensure their actions are justified and proportionate.

3.2 The following advice should be taken into account:

- You must enter the hard shoulder at a speed that you can stop in the distance you can see to be clear.
- Lights and sirens must be used at all times unless there is a justified and proportionate reason for not doing so when balanced with the risk of being on the hard shoulder.
- Speed should be kept to a minimum so any risk can be reduced.
- Do not enter the hard shoulder from behind a large vehicle as this limits your view ahead.
- Be aware that your lights and sirens may cause other motorists to pull onto the hard shoulder into your path.
- Tyre grip is not as effective on the hard shoulder as it is on the carriageway.
- Debris can cause damage to the police vehicle and other motorists' vehicles hence the need for less speed. Be aware of the increased risk of punctures.
- In darkness be aware of hazards on the hard shoulder especially stranded vehicles which may not be lit, or pedestrians who may be walking from or to such a vehicle. Remember to check the police vehicle as soon as possible for any damage and punctures.

4. All Lane Running (ALR)

4.1 All officers and staff must be aware that, on sections of the motorways in Surrey and Sussex, the hard shoulder has been removed entirely and Emergency Refuge Areas (ERA) can be up to 2.5 kilometres apart.

4.2 Police requests to stop under Section 163 RTA (or other relevant legislation) should be avoided within the ALR network. This is due to significant additional risks of no hard shoulder. Any stop performed on the ALR should be carried out following a dynamic NDM based risk assessment. The usage of "FOLLOW ME" signage should be considered to guide the other road user to a safer location.

4.3 Consideration should be given by staff attending the ALR network regarding the heightened potential risks, especially on first attendance. Early requests should be made to National Highways for appropriate warning and lane closure signage whilst on route to the incident.

5. Motorway Signals / Tunnel – Red Crosses

5.1 Red crosses above lanes are to be treated as a red traffic light. If responding to an incident using emergency equipment, they may be passed with extreme caution.

5.2 Drivers of police vehicles responding to an incident may pass beyond them diligently bearing in mind that there may be hazards ahead such as road operatives, collisions, stranded vehicles or debris. Speed must be adjusted accordingly to allow the safe passing of the hazard.

5.3 If a contraflow is in effect within either the Hindhead Tunnel or the Southwick Tunnel responding units should consider switching off blue lights until they have passed the contraflow. Any officer overtaking in a tunnel while a contraflow is in force may find themselves coming into conflict with approaching traffic.

6. Wrong way vehicles on the SRN / DFR

6.1 Officers may be deployed to or encounter a vehicle travelling the wrong on any SRN / DFR whilst in the course of their general patrol. Any decision taken to tactically stop the vehicle or allow it to continue unhindered should be based upon a full dynamic NDM risk assessment.

7. Actions Specific to FCR / FCCCD

7.1 FCR / FCCCD staff must seek to utilise all available potential risk mitigation tools as soon as practicable. These can include but not limited to: Early notification to National Highways, Local Authority (DFN) and INRIX (Data management System). Request for Matrix and other available signage, requests for support must be made through a Highways Agency Traffic Officer (HATO) or other resources.

7.2 FIM must ensure that staff who have been placed into a position where they are acting outside of their training capability are given a clear safety briefing. (As per 2.12).

7.3 FCR / FCCCD staff must check the Fast Roads grading of officers they are deploying to the SRN or a DFR.

Team: Operations Command Roads Policing Unit